# Ask The Expert – Is Your Workplace Ready for the Next Infectious Illness Outbreak?




**Summer often brings a false sense that infectious disease risks have passed.**

In reality, warmer months are the ideal time for OHS leaders to review response plans, replenish supplies, and address gaps before fall and winter respiratory illness season begins.

## QUESTION

Should OHS leaders be reviewing their infectious illness preparedness plans during the summer?

## ANSWER

Yes. Summer – especially **this** summer – is the best opportunity to evaluate your organization's readiness while operations are stable and before illness rates begin to rise.

## EXPLANATION

Waiting until an outbreak occurs leaves little time to address weaknesses. A thorough preparedness review should confirm that infectious disease policies are current, responsibilities are clearly assigned, and employees understand reporting and

response procedures. OHS leaders should also verify that supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfecting products, and hand hygiene resources are adequate and readily available.

Other important questions include whether ventilation systems have been maintained, procedures exist for isolating ill workers when necessary, cleaning protocols can be intensified during an outbreak, and business continuity plans account for staffing shortages. Finally, organizations should ensure they can quickly communicate changing public health guidance and provide refresher training if new or emerging infectious diseases become a concern.

By asking these questions before they’re needed, employers can respond faster, reduce workplace transmission, and better protect workers while maintaining business operations. Regular preparedness audits also demonstrate due diligence and help organizations remain adaptable as infectious disease risks continue to evolve.